

5 Nov. 1966

Dear Miss McAlinden:

I suppose we should be flattered that people expect us to identify plants from the merest fragments, but we really are not all that good. Even the best criminologists and practical detectives must have some clues. If the person from Albany really wants to know what she has, she should be willing to send considerably more of her plants. However, I have done what I could with the fragments.

1 - The leaf is surely from a mallow, family Malvaceae. It is velvety like an Abutilon, the flowering-maples, and somewhat variegated like Abutilon pictum Walp. Without more material, that is the best I can do. I suspect that it is that species, a native of southern South America.

2 - is even more difficult since there are no leaves, no flowers, etc. However, the development of bracts and the arrangement of the inflorescence almost requires it to belong to the Acanthaceae. Until I see more of the plant, I can go no further with it than that. The family is a difficult one requiring much attention to technical characteristics of the flower, stamens, pollen, etc.

3 - is very easy since it is relatively complete and is also growing in my back yard. It is the Golden Rain Tree, Koelreuteria paniculata, a native of Japan, China, and Korea. It is widely cultivated in this country and belongs to the Sapindaceae, the largely tropical Soap-tree Family. "Raintree County", book and movie, took its name apparently from this tree.

4 - is also an excellent specimen and I wish I had it growing in my back yard. It is the Kurrajong of the Bottle-tree genus, Brachychiton. It is B. populneum R. Br. of Queensland to Victoria, Australia. Like our beautiful native Fremontodendron and the Guatemalan Melaleuca "Mexican" Hand Plant, Cheiranthodendron, it belongs to the Sterculiaceae, the cacao or cocoa or cola family, a cousin of the Malvaceae, mallow family, of no. 1 above.

As you say, we hit a good average with 50% excellent specimens for determination.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Thorne